

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

RUBEN PAZ GOMEZ,

Petitioner,

v.

YANISLEIDY REYES GONZALEZ,

Respondent.

CASE NO. C24-5645-KKE

ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR PRO
BONO COUNSEL AND STRIKING
HEARING

This matter comes before the Court on Respondent's application for court-appointed counsel. Dkt. No. 25. The Court grants the application, refers the case to the pro bono coordinator, and strikes the case scheduling hearing set for October 4, 2024.

The Court finds that "exceptional circumstances" exist in this matter to appoint counsel for Respondent. *See, e.g., Palmer v. Valdez*, 560 F.3d 965, 970 (9th Cir. 2009). To decide whether exceptional circumstances exist, the Court must evaluate both "the likelihood of success on the merits [and] the ability of the [plaintiff] to articulate his claims pro se in light of the complexity of the legal issues involved." *Wilborn v. Escalderon*, 789 F.2d 1328, 1331 (9th Cir. 1986) (cleaned up). Based on Respondent's answering document (Dkt. No. 22) which raises multiple defenses, her efforts to identify counsel, the potential for severe consequences for each parent and the child, and the necessity for expedited proceedings, appointment of pro bono counsel is warranted.

1 Accordingly, the Court GRANTS Respondent's application. Dkt. No. 25. The Western
2 District of Washington's pro bono coordinator is directed to identify counsel to represent
3 Respondent, in accordance with the Court's General Order 07-23 ("In re: Amended Plan for the
4 Representation of Pro Se Litigants in Civil Rights Actions"), section 3. Once it has been
5 determined whether the Court will be able to appoint an attorney to represent Respondent, the
6 Court will issue appropriate orders.

7 The Court also STRIKES the case scheduling hearing set for October 4, 2024 (Dkt. No.
8 23) pending the appointment of counsel for Respondent.

9 Petitioner's counsel is ordered to provide a copy of this order to Respondent by mail and
10 email.

11
12 Dated this 3rd day of October, 2024.

13 

14 _____
15 Kymberly K. Evanson
16 United States District Judge
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24